(2) Increase in the Haj quota for India by 50,000 at least.

(c) The proposed Amendment Bill for Haj Committee Act, 2002 is under Ministry's consideration. As regards increase in Haj quota, the Royal Government of Saudi Arabia has increased the quota for India for Haj 2008 to 167,991 - as compared to the quota of 157,000 seats for Haj 2007.

Agreement for nuclear reactor with Russia

696. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a significant concession to New Delhi, India and Russia have finalized the negotiations on an agreement for an additional nuclear reactor in Koodankulam;

(b) if so, whether an agreement was reached in this regard during Russian Prime Minister's visit along with 150 business delegates;

(c) if so, whether under the terms of the deal, Russia would build four extra reactors at Koodankulam in Tamil Nadu;

(d) if so, by what time a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(e) by when the work on the project is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Yes, India and Russia have finalised negotiations on an Inter-Governmental Agreement on cooperation in the construction of additional nuclear power plant units at Kudankulam site in February 2008 during the Russian Prime Minister's visit to India. The Agreement is expected to be signed between the two Governments in the near future after which its implementation would start.

Supply of uranium from Africa

697. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has decided to tap the African continent for sourcing uranium civil nuclear programme;

(b) if so, whether South Africa has also conveyed to India that it would not be averse to supplying uranium to India;

(c) whether an Indian company recently bagged exclusive rights for exploration and mining of uranium in Niger;

(d) if so, whether any agreement has been signed with these countries;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the total uranium to be obtained from these countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) Yes. During his visit to India for the Third IBSA Summit, President Kgalema Motlanthe of South Africa

announced in a Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister that South Africa would have no difficulty or objection in supplying uranium to India.

(d) No.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

G-8 summit in Japan

698. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had attended the G-8 Summit in Japan recently; and

(b) if so, the issues discussed therein and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Prime Minister attended the G-8 outreach sessions in Japan on 9 July 2008.

(b) The issues discussed at the outreach sessions included the Heiligendamm Process, world economy, climate change and environment, development, with focus on Africa and regional issues.

Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan jails

699. SHRI P. R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian fishermen who are in Sri Lankan jails;

(b) whether Government of India has taken up their cause at diplomatic levels; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) As of October 2008, there is no *bona fide* fisherman of India in Sri Lankan custody. However, there are eight Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody for their alleged involvement in smuggling narcotics and explosives, and for transporting Sri Lankan refugees.

(b) and (c) Government have always taken up on a priority basis the question of the safety of our fishermen with Sri Lanka. High Commission of India in Colombo, Sri Lanka has taken up the issue with concerned Sri Lankan authorities for speedy disposal of the cases of the eight fishermen currently in custody.

Visit of US officials

700. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officials, diplomats and political leaders from the United States who have visited the country in the last two years to hold talks on the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement with Government of India, political parties and other officials; and

(b) the details of the talks available with Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There have been several visits by officials, diplomats and political leaders from the United States of America to India in the last two years. Notable among them were the visits of the US Treasury Secretary, Henry Paulson in October 2007, Governors of the US States of Minnesota and Utah in September-